

Coweta eliminates impact fees to help businesses

Sunday, December 22, 2013 - 12:59pm
Submitted by Ben Nelms

The Coweta County Commission on Tuesday made a calculated move to stimulate business growth in the county. Commissioners by unanimous vote eliminated the impact fees previously required with new development.

Impact fees were introduced in Coweta in April 2006. Those fees were intended to help offset the cost of providing public services and capital improvements in the area of the development. The vote to eliminate those fees completely came without discussion by the board.

County administrator Michael Fouts after the meeting said the move to eliminate the fees is meant to aid the development of large and small businesses in the county.

"It is never an easy thing for governmental officials to revisit earlier decisions. But our commissioners took up difficult deliberations and decided that this strategy best addresses our current economic climate, and is in the best interest of our whole community," Newnan-Coweta Chamber President Candace Boothby said Wednesday. "Our chamber agrees, and we thank the board members for their thoughtfulness and courage in making this change."

The Development Impact Fee ordinance amendment that eliminated the fees cited the review of the county's fee schedule in 2010 and in 2012 and the reduction in collection of those fees due to the effects of the recession.

Coweta in FY 2009 collected \$799,903 in impact fees. Collections decreased to \$524,462 in FY 2012.

Commissioners reviewed the fee schedule more recently and determined that, based on the economy, the county's impact fee schedule should be amended to promote economic development by reducing the fees for all classifications to \$0.00 per square foot.

"This decision is one that will show our investors that Coweta County, as 'Prosperity's Front Door,' is open for business and is doing all it can to make Coweta an attractive location for business. We are grateful that our commissioners listened to the feedback from the chamber and the business community, and we are appreciative of the many hours invested in this decision," Boothby said. "Our entire community, especially the business members, should benefit from this action. The more businesses that invest in Coweta, employ our residents and contribute to our tax revenues make for a stronger community and more customers for your business. Please take a moment to thank our commissioners the next opportunity you have to do so."